

Escape From New York: Special Edition

Standard DVD reviewed by: Fusion3600

Studio: MGM

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Plot - What's it all about?

Snake Plissken (Kurt Russell) was once known as a war hero, but now he is known as the most dangerous criminal in existence. But when the heat hits the coals, this feared criminal seems to be the United States government's best chance to recover some very vital elements. You see, since the crime rates have skyrocketed in the U.S., officials have turned New York into one large prison, where they send all the worst criminal element. This means most of them are killed by other prisoners and in short, is cheaper and more effective than traditional prison systems. This seems to work well enough, but when a freak accident happens, it seems as though no one can survive the massive prison to recover some items. The president (Donald Pleasance) was flying over the city when a terrorist attack forces him to eject, which leaves him and some important documents within the limits of this prison. And since Snake is the only man tough enough to venture into New York, they ask for his help in exchange for his freedom. But since Snake has an explosive device implanted within his body by them, it seems the choice was pretty easy to make. Can Snake overcome the dangers of New York to track down the goods and return to collect his freedom?

This is one of the coolest movies of all time, hands down. So when MGM released Escape from New York in a bare bones edition, fans were more than disappointed. After all, a laserdisc edition was issued with some extras weren't those goodies ported over? Well know fans can rejoice, as MGM has given this brand new two disc Edition. We have the stuff from the laserdisc, plus a few new tidbits to sweeten the deal. Even aside from supplemental materials, this disc is a welcome release and the new anamorphic transfer is more than worth the cash. I'd love to have seen the extras ported over, but I won't cry too much over spilt milk. This is one of personal favorite flicks of all time and even the sequel wasn't up to task, the shine isn't dulled in the least original classic. This one is loaded with intense action, memorable characters, and some terrific catch phrases more can you ask for? Kurt Russell is outstanding as Snake, while the supporting cast and direction of John Carpenter are also in fine form. This new Special Edition release from MGM includes a brand new visual transfer plus a host of supplements, so it deserves a most high recommendation.

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Disc Specifications

- ✔ **Widescreen (2.35:1)**
- ✔ **Video Codec: MPEG 2**
- ✔ **Audio Mix: Dolby Digital 5.1**
- ✔ **Trailer**
- ✔ **Commentary**
- ✔ **Deleted/Extended Scenes**
- ✘ **Documentary**
- ✔ **Featurette**
- ✘ **Blu-Ray Exclusive(s)**
- ✔ **Number of Discs: 1**

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A lot of fans bemoaned the lack of a new Dolby Digital 5.1 option on the previous, but there is no such absence this time around. I have to admit, I didn't think the difference would be that noticeable, but this new soundtrack is terrific. Of course, the movie has a wicked musical score and it has more life and power than ever before. When The Duke's motorcade rolls by and his theme blasts, you feel the bass and the mood is enhanced ten times over. This film also has a lot of action driven sequences, which also benefit from the added channels. So the chases seem more tense, the explosions rock harder, and the fights are that much wilder. All in all, a great remix and one that should please fans, even the purists. This release also includes a French language track, as well as subtitles in English, Spanish, and French.

Supplements - It's all about the extras...

You can listen to two audio commentary tracks, one with star Kurt Russell and director John Carpenter, the other with producer Debra Hill and production designer Joe Alves. Of course, Russell and Carpenter provide an excellent session, one full of insights about the production, from technical information to humorous stories. The second track is also quite good, as Hill has a lot of data about the picture, while Alves recalls how the visuals were achieved. A deleted scene of a bank robbery opening can be seen here, as well as watched with optional audio comments from Carpenter and Russell. A broader look into the production can be found in Return to Escape from New York, a new featurette that is loaded down with interviews. Russell is back with several other key cast members, while Carpenter, Alves, and Hill and joined by writer Nick Castle and director of photography Dean Cundey. This release also includes a look at the Snake Plissken comic book, some still photos, and the film's teaser & theatrical trailers.

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